Dorothy Hunt-death/plane crashes 12/23/72

Because in going to Ian's I go right past the Bethesda post office, have other things to mail, and can save four days in getting this to you by not waiting for an envelope to hold all 8¢ will bear, you lucky people, I use heavier paper than the second sheets.

I think I have sent you everything Larry sent me. If I haven't, please let me know what I did send and I do have the paper and will send. Howard will probably want to go through that file anyway. I have a separate one on her death. I delayed copying and sending you the syndicated version of the Ross piece enclosed - he knows the CIA pretty well- in the hope that Larry would send the original. He hasn't. If he does yet, I will. It is a rather interesting bit, 12/12/72, Star-News.

Ross right 3/3/74 - See Ervin hrgs. McLeod/12/4/72 McGinley p.3

On reading it you will recognize that is has some substantiation for our belief this all was agency-connected. I disagree with Ross's interpretation that it had to mean there was still Hunt/Agency involvement. I think he could have simply had the old agency passport renewed.

I am inclined to believe Ross has it mixed a bit on the gambling-casino concession to Fiorini after Castro won. I think it more likely he was the commissar to whom I've referred. I find it fascinating that Anderson, having written of this with Pearson before I wrote O in NO, has not mentioned this. When you speak to Hal, please ask him if he still has that piece. My copy has disappeared. It should be looked at again with some care, especially the part about the commissar's high living and grafting.

Right - see Ervin hrgs.

If the things extraneous to the indictment are explored at the trial, which would be consistent with the atypical behavior of Judge Sirica in ordering the inclusion of other things not in the indictment and I think could lead to an overturned conviction, then the obvious purpose would be to cool the Nixonians and heat the CIA's pants, to make it seem like their "self-starters" did the dirty things. Remember, Helms is going.

Some of what I included in memos Larry told me by phone. He spoke to me to get some info, then spoke to his people, which seems to have gotten them onto the story they, like your locals, had avoided, and then he spoke to me after their police reporter started writing stories. Larry says he knows more than he has printed and won't talk about anything he hasn't. He told Bob Woodward less than Larry told me and I read in his stories. Don't know why. Larry had the benefit of all the Chicago papers, what others told him, and various editions. He has marked some by the edition in which it appeared. All did not have stories.

One-trip, air-insurance is very cheap. I don't have time to check the rates and it is some time since I was familiar with them. However, I think the $7.50 premium, which is lower than I remember, is for a couple of days at best. This would seem to indicate that she had only a brief visit in mind or premonitions. Also, if it is the only insurance she had, that she didn't expect to fly much again. Now that is inconsistent with her vacation flying. Cheap as this insurance can be for the sums in the coverage, it is much cheaper on an annual basis, and the trip to Spain alone justified other insurance. So, getting it from the machine makes me wonder much. The stories agree in general but disagree in detail. And the machine does not write all the insurance on the trip or plane. Mutual of Omaha has many attendant-staffed booths at National. Or, every terminal I can remember, I know Friendship and Dulles.

I have many possible opinions in mind but ~~not~~ none that is settled and none that is eliminated. The insurance and the needless vagueness of the deal and Fiorini's message on the bills and Hunt and Carlstead each separately being reported as the one who identified the body and other inconsistencies all or any can make the everyday suspect. Maybe Hunt is a living spook and uses cash when a check is without hazard because he had become one of his own characters? I don't believe it, but it is possible. I am also not satisfied that he accumulated enough from boiling pots, spookery and his wife's unspectacular employment to swing his life style, a really expensive home, all that legal cost and, after six months of unemployment have a checking account in wife's name with more than $3,000 in it, $10,000 also in cash to spare for an investment (with NY federal-reserve rather than DC or Richmond numbers), and for her to have almost $600 extra in cash on her for a trip so short when the ticket was paid for and she didn't even have to take a cab or got to a hotel. Or, they ain't hurtin for $$$ and surely aren't expecting to have to pay any legal bills, something immune, can't be raised in court. At Hogan & Hartson rates, more than $10,000 has already been spent and it has not yet begun. Acquittal is impossible except by official contrivance, so there will be an exceptionally costly trial plus appeals,

and were he a man of independent wealth if he expected to have to pay his own lawyer's bills, the last thing Hunt would be doing would be looking for investments. He would be more concerned about financial survival. So, the GOPs or the Agency or his agency or a combination is footing the bills or this stach was for a purpose other than normal business "investment" or both.

I don't know who fed the Post bad info on when Hunt went to Chicago and why, but they were wrong by a day and I think it possible a reason was served. However, under such circumstances, I have no doubt a phone call got him an ok to go. He seems to have been there fast even for that, although there is no reason to suspect anything about this. You see, if he were home and if he knew the minute it happened, and if he had no problem getting on the first plane, he was about an hour from National. If the plane was waiting for him he was four hours away from the morgue at the very fastest I think six probably more realistic, and then going to O'Hare rather than Midway, to which there are fewer flights. Unless there was a fortunate accident, a plane just to suit his needs. I suggested to Larry and Woodward both checking his travel agency and getting it from her ticket, which was likely to have survived since the rest of the contents of her purse did.

If I said there was an immediate link to a former ambassador to Paraguay, that is not what I noew recall. I recall Uruguay, and I got it by radio, I think from WBBM, which is in Chicago. If not a DC all-news station. Which makes it more intresting that he had served the Agency in Montevideo.

I have commented separately on some of the possibilities of the hypnotist and neurologist in a letter to Larry, carbon sent you. More are possible if one were to conjecture about possibilities. We know too little. The odd thing is this guy's disappearance from his offices and the removal of the phones at just this time.

As a generality I quite agree with the higher dependability of initial police statements and because of this belief have in the past spent much time seeking them. However, in this case I can't agree. She could not have travelled with no documents at all or she'd not have been identified as fast and there would still remain the question of how the $10,000 could be connected with her. She was very badly burned. Her purse was not. So, the money can be connected with her purse only, not her body. If connected with her purse to the exclusion of others, then her purse has to be as certainly connected to her name. To exlore other possibilities I got the passenger list. Nothing shows on it to arouse suspicion.

My suspicions about the crash were also prompted by my experience at O'Hare just a year ago. I'd taken off from Dallas just after Thanksgiving, I think the same weekend in 1971, and had not seen the ground from a low elevation until landing at O'Hare, then for the first time when over hangars. That bad-or good. This kind of weather must have covered at least the eastern half of the country for several days. It was no better when I took off for Stevens' Point, Wisc., North Central. First stop and last- Green Bay. Weather aborted the rest of the trip. Returning from Green Bay to O'Hare, the same weather, except it was then daylight, which I think is the only reason they let the plane fly, and it was a bit less overcast at Green Bay, our one intermediate stop. No better at O'Hare. Now I was quite impressed at the capabilities of the navigational equipment, not just the altimeter. We were directly over the right runway at O'Hare when it was invisible to the pilot and we made the entire approach in dense soup. At National it was even more spectacular, first sighting being of the runway from no more than 75-100' up and it seemed like much less. Saw terra firm as we were about to touch down and the first thing I saw was the runway on which he landed. So, I raised this with Larry. He says the electronic gear at Midway does not being to approximate that at O'Hare, which I can believe. Increased use of Midway is relatively recent. So, human error or a faulty altimeter could account for the wreck. However, I think not completely, and I think there is not simple, single error unless it was at the tower. My original hunch is born out by the Anderson statement you quote- I saw him on TV, too and other things. The plane was far short of the runway and the field itself. That can't be blamed on a faulty altimeter only, I think, for the plane was setting down too soon or too fast. If the latter, experienced flying passengers like Anderson (and others also said what he did) would have noticed it. Why too soon then? I don't know. I suppose there is an outside possibility that someone had jimmied with the plane's gear. Or it could have gone wrong on its own. It was not an old plane for it was one of the newer models. Its original equipment, therefore, was more modern.

official conclusion 3/3/74

Other things remain to be explained. Does it not seem natural that setting down through soup the pilot or copilot would have been all eyes for when he was in the clear, for many reasons, most of all in the heavy Chicago traffic? Now if at 500 feet he could see, there is little likelihood that if anybody had an eye peeled he feared hitting a skyscraper, and not outside the center of town, or a radio or TV aerial. There is no report of another plane that close. People would have seen it. One mile visibility at landing speed gave enough time to avoid a visible object had there been one. And had there been one, I think Larry would have been aware of it and it would have been reported..

Maybe Anderson is right in his 4,000 feet and all's well report, proba ly a paraphrase. Pilot's never talk like that. More likely Anderson's interpretation of the pilot's saying cigarettes out and we are at 4,000 feet and in our landing pattern, something like that.

The jets can't bite the air like prop jobs. I've been through that enough, near you. Especially when they have revved down for landing. They can climb much better when their power is up in taking off.. Even then concerned pilots complain of the steepness of the ascent required of them to minimize the spread of noise and the simultaneous reduction of power. This has been a com on complaint of those flying out of National.

Supporting this general kind of situation and Anderson's comment is eye-witness accounts of the tail low, the plane being in a wrong or sure-to-crash attitude. So, I think we can be reasonably sure that the immediate cause of the crash was loss of power from over-gunning. This would be a very rare accidental over-throttling, I believe. So, I'm inclined to believe that more than pilot error there was some reason for the pilot to believe he had to take the chance he did. A real and very immediate emergency.

3/3/74 Night - Mpm

Undermining this reasoning are two things: nothing visual reported by those who saw the plane, ad if it were another plane it had to be above 500 feet when this plane was below it, not indicating reason for this one to climb; and nothing in the account of instructions about the private jet(these private planes are the greatest single aerial menace and getting worse and seemingly beyond control). Althouhg I'm not clear on how close to the airport this plane was, it had to be close to be under 500 feet. Yet for the private jet to be a hazard, it had to be flying toward this plane. I think that for the most part they use the resistence of the blowing wind to assist in lifting or ~~braking~~. Maybe not at an airport with long enough runways. But to just raise up, without going to either side so close to landing, does not indicate the maneuver was to avoid another plane, unless he had to get higher first. I'd expect if avoidance was the need, he'd had gunned without trying to go higher, to get enough airspeed to make turning safe enough to try. In a sense, all does indicate pilot error, but what we don't know is if he had a choice or the real reason. A faulty altimeter alone seems like an inadequate reason because the tower radar would have told him that. This can indicate tower fault, but then that would presuppose a faulty altimeter also and the pilot's ignoring his altimeter if it were not faulty. Weather alone is not enough explanation. I've landed in worse at too many airports other than the best-equipped.. NO. often enough, especially. Barely above the tops of the pines coming out of the soup. But all these things plus the large insurance of which we know, which may not be all, and other story-book stuff that, with story-book characters ought not be dismissed out of hand. make it a mystery justifying suspicion of dirty deeds. All we have to hear now is that she was upset at his more recent exploits. God knows that unless she was a weirdo she had cause from his past.

New Orleans

Your provocative listing of other mysterious crashes omits one you might want to recall, that of Chep Morrison with the pilot one would have though him least likely to select for private flying, Hugh Ward, Guy Banister's former partner. Hoke May says Chep was investigating the CIA in Latin America at the time and that none of the storys stack. As with EMK's pilot, Ward also was killed. If power loss was the factor in EMK's, the pilot would have had time to report it, and I suspect he would have in this one, too. Probably more than the enough you cite to justify suspicion in the Reuther crash can be said about him and the timing of the crash.But all were in similar weather, which could have been known in advance. I've forgotten the CIA position on Cambodia, if I knew it, but that doesn't mean anything because they do have self-starters.

If your concluding bit on Mrs. H's trip to Spain is based not on accurate writing but real facts, then there is basis for suspecting all was not the best with the Hunts. He knew <u>before</u> the arrests what was going to happen, and if only for the kids, he'd have wanted her home. Even 6/20 is a delay fo normal conditions. The same day or with the time difference, at the least the next, was what would be the case in a normal family situation. He'd have

phoned her or had her phoned.. Indeed, with so long a career in spookery, I'd expect they had a private code to cover such contingencies. (Sorry about this damned ribbon blinding me.) So with a return 6/20 and much more so 6/26, I don't think it can be explained by anything besides her not knowing or not caring or his not telling her, all indicating a strain on normal family situations.

What makes no sense at all is anyone with spook knowledge believing that the FBI had as its interest her "Personal [sic] and professional activities". Unless she also had an odd "personal" career. Inside a foreign embassy, not unlikely, not not likely in a way that would be of interest to the FBI, esp. in Spain, which your paraphrase leaves unclear.

Hunt was egomaniacal and did very stupid things, but he had to know he could be ripped off any second. I don't think there is any chance he was not aware of the possibilities. He might have expected those he knew not to talk. but there were those he did not know, like Baldwin. and what he had no way of knowing, whether he was seen or the investigation he knew would have to be intense would finger him. I think we have a fairly reasonable preumption there may have been some kind of family strain. His immediate return from Chicago may or may not bear on this. He may have felt he had to be with the kids, but unless he was entirely friendless, he did not have to worry about them being lone. I feel that most men would have been inclined to stay in Chicago a bit longer, until they, personally, had made all necessary arrangements and in his case made at least an effort to get the $100,585 or a receipt for it. If he was willing to leave Washington because of "harrassment", he was willing to leave the kids alone when they had other and severe stresses with which to cope He seems to have left before she returned.

The NYTimes 12/9/72 maps shows the plane was almost at the airport, so certainly under 500 feet and no time to maneuver. It says three stewardesses survived. No Anderson-like or any other statement from any one? Odd. Or ordered? Mrs. Cotter indicates a burning plane before it crashed.

What do you make other than the possibility of loose writingin the LATimes story in the Chron 12/12, saying that the Chicago U.S.Attorney's office "is involved in the prosecution of the bugging case"? ?

And suppose E. Howard is not a beneficiary of the insurance? I see no need to keep identification of the benficiaries secret, unless there is something abnormal. Like him not being included.

Time of the crash 3:30 p.m. Washington time. The stories that have Hunt getting there and back the same day are wrong or he had special means of exceptional luck. Especially on a Friday night and in bad weather. I've sat at O'Hare under these circumstances for about two hours after the plane was loaded. Then had what to then was the roughest ride I'd ever had (worse since) and the best Chicken Kiev , which got onto my clothes.That rough.It took two hours plus to get to the airport by cab that night. Remember, without delay and without stacking, on a non-stop flight air time is two hours. National and O'Hare, if he used it, are two of the three worst and busiest. If he was in central Chicago, where one would expect to find officialdom, he went to OHare except by flukey arrangements. If he saw officialdom and then visited the Carlsteads and then used Midway, all this took more time. I'm a little intrigued by the excessive haste, as reported, and the wrong reporting, which I don't think the Post did on purpose.

Gotta split for Ian's,

Best,